



## Press Release

22 June 2005

### Why we limeys are really krauts!

New National Archives exhibition (s)quashes popular term

For centuries the English have been known around the globe as 'limeys', an affectionately sour appellation which originally applied to British sailors in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, referring to their use of citrus fruit to ward off scurvy.

However, new research by The National Archives for its new exhibition ***Captains, Pirates and castaways: The Battles and voyages of Nelson, Cook and Bligh***, which launches today (22 June), suggests we should be called 'krauts' instead!

Documents written by Captain Cook on his first voyage on Endeavour show that he and his men relied on six tonnes of sauerkraut rather than limes to ward off scurvy.

The research for the exhibition is based on Admiralty, Colonial Office and Foreign Office records from 1728–1817, which are held at The National Archives in Kew and have never been displayed before.

**The exhibition's curator, Andrew Lambert**, Laughton Professor of naval history at King's College London, said: "On Cook's ship, the Endeavour, there were no limes. Instead Cook was issued with a number of untested foodstuffs to prevent scurvy. Sauerkraut was the only one that was of any use for this purpose, and he made the men eat it, despite their objections. Later the Navy recognised lemon juice was the best to prevent scurvy, but lemons were expensive, so cheaper limes were substituted, even though they were far less effective. The slang 'limey' seems to suggest that the British were cheapskates!"

The exhibition – which is **free** – will reveal the highlights from the amazing careers of these three iconic naval officers, including the mutiny on the Bounty, the violent death of Captain Cook and the creation of Nelson's posthumous reputation.

Some of the fascinating themes explored will include Nelson, Cook and Bligh's contribution to modern-day sea power, connections between their contrasting leadership styles, and their ventures to un-charted territory (Bligh became a castaway for a short period!).

Documents on display for the first time include:

- The Battle of Trafalgar action plan, intricately outlining the three positions of the British fleet
- a codicil belonging to Nelson, in which he writes about leaving Merton to serve King and country
- Cook's log for the first voyage of the Resolution
- examples of Nelson's writing before and after he lost an arm

- Bligh's log book of the Bounty

**Further information, interviews, content list and images are available by contacting Lawrence Hall on 020 8392 5712 or 07813 115 129 or via email: [lawrence.hall@mission-21.com](mailto:lawrence.hall@mission-21.com)**

## Notes to Editors:

**Getting to the Archives - Nearest tube and train:** Kew Gardens (District line tube and National Rail) and Kew Bridge (National Rail), **Via car:** Access is off the Mortlake Road (A205 South Circular), **Parking:** Free parking is available for a limited number of vehicles **Admission:** Free **Contact The National Archives:** visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) or call 020 8392 5202

The National Archives, Kew, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book to newly released government papers. The free museum and research rooms are open to the public 6 days a week.

Over nine million records are available to view at Kew and some, including wills, First World War Army medal cards and Second World War Seamen's medal records are also available online at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline)

The research rooms at The National Archives and The Family Records Centre are open Monday 9am-5pm, Tuesday 10am-7pm, Wednesday 9am-5pm, Thursday 9am-7pm, Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 9.30am-5pm. Or visit [www.familyrecords.gov.uk](http://www.familyrecords.gov.uk) for more information.

UKTV History, the UK's leading specialist factual TV Channel, is proud to support this excellent exhibition. Showing some of the best of British History programmes including Naval History, UKTV History provides interesting analysis and new perspectives on a broad range of British and International topics. Part of the UKTV Network, UKTV History is available on Freeview Channel 12, Sky 582, NTL Home 607/100 and Telewest 203.

The Family Records Centre, Islington, which is jointly managed by The National Archives and the Office for National Statistics, holds the indexes (not the certificates themselves) for births, deaths and marriages for England and Wales from July 1837 and also copies of wills, before 1858, from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) and some other church courts.